

## **Community Action Head Start Programs 2022-23 Self-Assessment Report and Program Improvement Plan**

The Self-Assessment was conducted through analysis of data collected throughout the school year and analyzed during monitoring meetings. Program management assessed each service area of the program for this report; education, family services, inclusion & support, transportation, nutrition, ERSEA (eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment and attendance), and health, as well as program design and management.

The report identifies strengths found in the program as well as areas of improvement, which include health and safety concerns; systemic concerns indicated by multiple incidents in more than one location; or site-based concerns resulting from multiple issues in one location. Program leadership will monitor progress on the program improvement plans throughout the year, and provide quarterly updates to report progress to the Board of Directors and the Policy Council.

### **Strengths**

**Parent Satisfaction:** The program conducted a parent satisfaction survey in the spring of 2023, Of approximately 200 respondents:

- 99.5% said they felt supported or well supported by their Family Educator or Early Head Start Teacher/Home Visitors.
- 98% indicated the program did well addressing their concerns and making individualized plans to support their child at school.
- 97% indicated the program had a positive impact on parents' relationship with their child.
- The largest barriers to receiving Health Care services were finding appointment times available (19%) and family discomfort to attend appointments due to Covid-19 (7%).
- When asked how Head Start helped their family this past year, respondents five top areas were: Sharing of Community Resources (63%), Strengthening Your Family (47%), Emotional Support (39%), Food (35%), and Continue Parent's Education (25%).

One spot that was a struggle this year for Family Services/Inclusion and Support was our completion of PHQ-9s.

Parent survey comments:

"I loved the communication between the teacher and I. they were very attentive with our children and their allergies. we truly appreciated safety protocols."

"Thank you for building up my child's confidence to learn."

"Love the staff helped me with what I needed with any concerns that i had with my child. They go above and beyond to meet your needs."

"Everything was amazing. great group of teachers."

*"Estamos muy satisfechos con todas las ayudas que nos a dad el personal de HeadStart especialmente con toda la ayuda que nos ha dado la maestra con nuestro hijo en el proceso de WESD y transición al Kinder."* "We are very pleased with all the help that the HeadStart staff has given us, especially with all the help that the teacher has given us with our son in the WESD process and transition to Kindergarten."

**Classroom Health & Safety:** All classrooms and sites are assessed with the completion of a Health and Safety Checklist three times a year by a supervisor from a different location. Sites are also inspected annually by the agency's Safety Coordinator and by the Licensing Specialist from Oregon Child Care Division. For the second consecutive year, all sites were found in compliance with health and safety requirements for the 2022-2023 school year.

**Family Services Support for Housing: Referrals** helped 64 families to be in stable housing, including 4 families who were homeless at the time of their child's enrollment.

**Parenting Education:** The program offers parenting education through partnerships with the early learning community, with a number of curricula providing an array of choices. Within our own program, Smart Connections is the chosen parenting education curriculum, which is associated with our Trauma Smart approach. This year, 62 families participated in Smart Connections, which was provided as a video series with discussion with staff and restarted in-person sessions for parents to connect with each other.

**Child Recruitment:** The program implemented creative child recruitment practices by using signage on city buses, billboards, and yard signs, participation in radio station and CCTV promotions, and live Facebook promotions.

**School Meals:** The nutrition team has done an excellent job adapting to food shortages and lack of availability of certain products from vendors. The team has been very flexible with food deliveries coming late and making substitutions to the menus when needed if products are unavailable. Nutrition and classroom staff did a great job transitioning from restaurant-style meal service back to family-style meals. This encouraged children to make healthy food choices of their own, as well as, practicing

fine motor skills by serving themselves and social skills by passing the shared bowls to their peers during the mealtime.

## **Areas of Concern and Program Improvement Plans**

**Understaffed:** Staff vacancies continued to be an issue for the 2022-2023 school year. At the end of the school year, there were 45 positions still vacant. Low numbers of applications from qualified candidates is a factor, but another level includes candidates interviewed and selected, but ultimately not onboarding due to factors in the hiring process, such as the length of time to complete background checks and references.

Program Improvement Plan: Staff Development and Training Advisor will meet weekly with HR recruiter to help identify where the process in hiring, on-boarding and ultimately starting in our sites is being delayed. It was also decided through our continued enrollment that we would request a reduction in both our Federal and State funded slots which would require a need for less staff. Lowering our overall issue of being understaffed.

**Under-Enrolled:** The Head Start pre-school program has struggled to fill our slots for several years. COVID is clearly a major factor for the past two years, but even prior to COVID, Head Start was challenging to fill. This is evidence that the early learning opportunities in our service area have shifted with the introduction of Preschool Promise and other publicly funded options, we find ourselves in a more competitive field. During the 2021-2022 school year, the highest level of enrollment for Head Start was 429 children, but the program is funded for 697. The infant toddler program options, also impacted by COVID, fared much better.

Program Improvement Plan: After a careful analysis of applications received, processing time, and the shared information from other early learning programs will assist us in making some decisions. Options available include transitioning slots from Head Start to Early Head Start, or requesting a reduction in slots from the Office of Head Start. In January 2023, program management will evaluate the data collection and come forward with recommendations to the Board of Directors and the Policy Council.

### **Aging Bus Fleet:**

Aging Bus Fleet: Aging school buses increase program maintenance costs, with the six oldest costing over \$3,500 this year for maintenance. Six buses are 14 years or older, and will be out of compliance with upcoming (2029) changes in regulations concerning emissions. We received two buses at no cost from Neighborhood Impact of Bend. These have been introduced into our fleet.

Program Improvement Plan: The Transportation Supervisor will provide an analysis and recommendation about how many buses are needed, with target dates, to program management. Budget planning will include the purchase of new school buses. State funding does not allow the purchase of vehicles, but federal funds do, so when the

opportunity arises through annual continuation applications and federal one-time funding requests are invited, the program will prioritize the purchase of new buses.

**Head Start Child Outcomes – Math:** Teachers complete seasonal assessments of children’s progress in learning, and the data is collected, analyzed and aggregated, then provided to program leadership, as well as the Policy Council and the Board of Directors as child outcomes. All areas of development contribute to determining school readiness, however, Mathematics, Language, and Literacy are researched indicators of a child’s potential for success in learning, narrowing the achievement gap at the third-grade level, and increasing the chance for high school and college graduation. Children fall into three categories for each learning domain, emerging, meeting and exceeding, with the goal of seeing each child progress through the stages at their individual pace.

While it is exciting to note the progress children make, it is equally important to evaluate the number of children who at the end of the year remain in the emerging categories.

Mathematics continues to be a concern and an area of needed growth for our program. We did see a slight improvement over the past year. In the 21-22 school year, 38% of our children ended the year emerging in math. This year, we ended the year with 25% of our children, program wide, remaining at the emerging level. 23% of children remained emerging in language and 19% in literacy.

As part of our program improvement plan from the 21-22 school year, we indicated that teachers would receive training at the 22-23 pre-service to increase their focus on early identification of children in emerging categories. Not only did that training take place, there were intentional changes in the seasonal outcome plans that teachers prepare after each checkpoint period. The changes required teachers to be very specific about identifying and tracking individual children who were falling into emerging categories throughout the school year, and evaluating potential causes that could be addressed throughout the year. Both of these efforts can be identified as contributors to the improvement in math scores, even though slight.

**Program Improvement Plan:** Head Start Teachers will continue to receive training at pre-service to focus on early identification of children in emerging categories. They will continue to complete detailed outcome plans at the end of each checkpoint season. The Education Manager will work with the Education Coaches to ensure that individualized coaching is provided to teachers who need to strengthen their environments and instruction in mathematics.